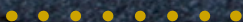


A twin-engine propeller aircraft is parked on a runway at sunrise. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange glow and long shadows. The sky is filled with soft, orange-tinted clouds. The aircraft is white with dark stripes along the fuselage and tail.

e-MICHIGAN Aviation

Published Electronically for Users of Michigan's Air Transportation System 

Winter 2009 Edition



HOUGHTON COUNTY AIRPORT (CMX) AT SUNRISE...
WHY IS CMX LOCATED WHERE IT IS? See page 5



DIRECTOR'S DESK



● **Rob Abent, Director**
*Michigan Aeronautics
Commission*

Welcome to the first issue of e-Michigan Aviation, the successor to the long-published Michigan Aviation. In the Autumn of 2007, the Michigan Department of Transportation, Bureau of Aeronautics & Freight Services suspended publication of the popular magazine as part of a department-wide cost saving initiative. The savings realized from printing and mailing nearly 18,000 copies each quarter will be significant.

In an effort to continue the same level of communication with our customers, we have decided to begin publishing our quarterly newsletter electronically. It is our hope that this publication, along with other information available on our web site, will continue to offer timely and useful information for users of Michigan's air transportation system. If you have suggestions or contributions for inclusion in future issues, please don't hesitate to contact us.

CHANGES AT THE AIRPORT

Since the creation of the Bureau of Aeronautics & Freight Services in 2006, our offices have been separate: Aeronautics offices at the Capitol Regional International Airport and Freight Services offices in downtown Lansing. As of October 1, 2008, both divisions are now located at the airport. We look forward to the new efficiencies that will be realized from this consolidation. Please feel free to visit us when you are in Lansing – the coffee is always on.

CHANGES AT THE COMMISSION

Two long-serving members have been reappointed to the Michigan Aeronautics Commission by Governor Jennifer Granholm. Sidney Adams, Jr., of Battle Creek and James Collins, of Marquette will continue to represent the public in new four-year terms.

In other news, Joyce Woods announced her resignation from the Commission following three years of service. She and her husband, Art, are relocating to New Mexico. We wish Joyce much success and will miss her counsel and leadership.

AIRPORT FUNDING

Michigan has a proud history of aviation innovation and remains a leader among states with its extensive air transportation infrastructure and innovative programs designed to serve the needs of Michigan residents and visitors. However, we face challenges in maintaining and upgrading that infrastructure to serve our future travel, economic development, and recreational endeavors. Over the last decade, the state has barely managed to maintain an adequate aviation infrastructure as a result of stagnation in our primary state funding source — an excise tax on aviation fuel. We have reached the point where action is required to prevent our airport system from degrading to a condition that negatively affects our future prosperity.

As we move into the second century of flight, Michigan must intensify its efforts to build a safe, modern, and innovative air transportation system. To realize this vision, we must capitalize on this opportunity to establish reliable, flexible, and sufficient funding sources that respond to the economic development and job creation needs of the state.

The current system for funding airport development and addressing aviation needs is antiquated and dangerously unresponsive to modern demands. As air transportation has evolved from the sands of Kitty Hawk to the far reaches of outer space, the State of Michigan continues to rely on funding mechanisms and tax rates that remain unchanged after nearly 80 years. In fact, the base rate for our primary funding mechanism, the aviation fuel excise tax, has never been adjusted and remains at 3¢ per gallon. The only change to the excise tax on aviation fuel was a 1.5¢ per gallon refund to interstate airlines which was instituted in 1945. The result has been a decline in aviation fuel tax revenues even before indexing for inflation. We have before us a unique opportunity to transform the way we invest in our aviation infrastructure to assure that we continue to address not only our transportation needs but those of future generations.

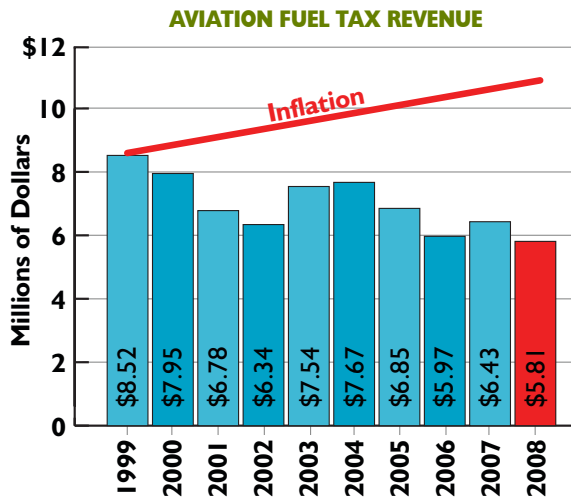
As outlined in Public Act 221 of 2007, the Transportation Funding Task Force (TF2) and the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) were tasked with reviewing strategies to replace or supplement state motor fuel taxes and other revenue-generating sources. To that end, the Aviation Subcommittee of the CAC set about quantifying needs, suggesting alternative funding mechanisms, and developing recommendations. See page 3 for more information on this important effort.

THANK YOU!

I would like to conclude by thanking all the aviation advocates who have worked so diligently over the last few years in an effort to advance the cause of aviation in Michigan. I hope that you enjoy our new electronic newsletter and please contact us if you have any suggestions or comments. We are always happy to talk with you. ✍

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING TASK FORCE ADDRESSES FUNDING CRISIS

We are truly in the midst of a transportation funding crisis in Michigan and the aviation sector has been hit particularly hard. When adjusted for inflation, 2008 aviation fuel tax revenues (which are used to leverage federal funds for airport preservation and vital aviation programs) were at their lowest level in over a decade and were approximately half that available in 1999.



On December 27th, 2007, Governor Granholm responded to this crisis by signing Public Act 221 of 2007. The legislation created two important bodies that were tasked with reviewing the adequacy of our existing funding process, quantifying infrastructure needs, and developing recommendations to address shortfalls in our funding mechanisms. The Governor appointed 9 members to the Transportation Funding Task Force ("TF2") and 19 members to the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC).

Representing the interests of aviation on the TF2 was Roger Salo, Director of Flight Operations for Masco Corporation. Bill Gehman, Senior Aviation Consultant with Mead & Hunt and former Director of the Bureau of Aeronautics, was appointed to the CAC representing the Michigan Business Aviation Association. Joining Bill on the CAC were Jim Koslosky, Director of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport in Grand Rapids, (representing the Michigan Association of Airport Executives) and MDOT Director Kirk Steudle. In addition, Matt Brinker from MDOT Aeronautics provided staff support.

PA 221 outlined the process and timeline by which the TF2 and CAC were to complete their work and submit a final report to the Governor. Over the course of 8 months, the TF2, with support from the CAC, examined the strengths and weaknesses of the existing transportation funding mechanisms. Meetings were held throughout the state to solicit input from local airports, transportation agencies, and the general public. As a result, the TF2 developed a number of possible funding alternatives including:

- **Increasing the aviation fuel tax**

The current aviation fuel tax rate is three cents per gallon. This rate remains unchanged since 1929. Since 1945, a refund of one and a half cents per gallon is provided to scheduled interstate airlines.

- **Increasing aircraft registration fees**

The current aircraft registration fee is one penny per pound of maximum gross weight or maximum takeoff weight. In 2008, the average airplane registration fee was \$39.

- **Abolishing the commercial airline refund**

As mentioned above, a refund of one and a half cents per gallon of the three cents per gallon aviation fuel tax is available to scheduled interstate airlines.

- **Working with Congress to increase the aviation block grant to Michigan**

As one of only 10 states that participate in the federal block grant program, Michigan benefits by having state and local control of decision-making for airport development projects as opposed to ceding that control to the FAA.

MDOT uses the prioritization system established in its Michigan Airport System Plan and works closely with airport authorities to determine priority for distribution of federal and state airport funds throughout Michigan.

- **Redirecting the state sales tax on aviation fuel and products to aviation purposes**

State sales tax at the rate of six percent of the retail price is currently levied on sales of aviation fuel and other aviation related products (aircraft, parts, etc.) but is not dedicated for return to the State Aeronautics Fund.

- **Converting the aviation fuel excise tax to an ad valorem tax**

Aviation fuel is currently taxed at a flat, cents per gallon (excise) rate that does not adjust with inflation or fuel prices. Converting the tax to a percent of sales price (ad valorem) would allow it to adjust with changing fuel prices and inflation.

- **Working with Congress to make reliever and super-reliever airports eligible for the same federal funding as primary airports.**

Funding for "Reliever" and "Super Reliever" airports, which handle excess general aviation traffic in busy metropolitan areas, is essential to maintain the efficiency of the national air transportation system. Under the current FAA authorization (and continuing resolution) there is no specific funding designated for Reliever or Super Reliever airports other than the standard General Aviation Entitlement funding (\$150,000).

On November 28th, 2008, in response to recommendations of the CAC and TF2, State Rep. Gabe Leland, D-Detroit, introduced HB 6751. The bill was designed to address the aviation funding crisis by modernizing the approach to funding aviation programs and infrastructure in Michigan. As proposed, HB 6751 would have increased the maximum annual fee for an aircraft dealer license to \$100, increased the aircraft registration fee from 1¢ to 2¢ per pound of maximum take off weight, and changed the aviation fuel tax rate to 3% of the wholesale price. Incorporating these changes would have helped ensure that Michigan is able to leverage the maximum possible federal Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding for 2009 and beyond.

Unfortunately, HB 6751 failed to advance before the conclusion of the legislature's 94th session at the end of the calendar year. However, leaders in the both the Michigan House and Senate realize the one thing we can't afford to do is nothing. They recognize the need to position Michigan's aviation system to address the needs of our airport users while maximizing economic development opportunities in this difficult economy. We will not give up the fight to preserve Michigan's place as one of the nation's leaders in aeronautical innovation.



COMMISSION ACTION

The Michigan Aeronautics Commission met in May, July, and September. Among items acted upon at each meeting was the approval of funding for airport improvements across the state. Some projects have federal, state, and local funding, while others are funded from state and/or local sources alone. Commission approval for federally funded projects authorizes state participation, subject to issuance of a federal grant. Federal and state dollars for airport development are primarily from restricted, user generated funds. The primary sources of revenue are aviation fuel and passenger taxes, as well as aircraft registration fees. Following are the approved projects:

Funding for the following airport improvement projects was approved by the Michigan Aeronautics Commission at the May 28, 2008 meeting.

ALLEGAN

Padgham Field

\$40,000 for a study to establish new approaches.

BATTLE CREEK

W.K. Kellogg Airport

\$8,000,000 for construction of an airport operations/maintenance facility. \$30,000 for consultant costs for a new parallel runway.

BAY CITY

James Clements Airport

\$32,500 for the design of a new seaplane base.

BEAVER ISLAND AIRPORT

\$300,000 for land acquisition and approach clearing.

BELLARIE

Antrim County Airport

\$117,095 for purchase of snow removal equipment.

CARO

Tuscola Area Airport

\$98,500 for an airport layout plan update, including aerial photography, environmental overview, and wetland delineation.

CHARLEVOIX

Charlevoix Municipal Airport

\$250,000 for building demolition.

CHEBOYGAN

Cheboygan County Airport

\$57,049 for utility relocation and approach clearing.

CLARE

Clare Municipal Airport

\$25,000 for an airport layout plan update.

DETROIT

Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport

\$1,333,333 for taxiway reconstruction.
\$5,066,667 for improvements to the airport de-icing system.

HART-SHELBY

Oceana County Airport

\$187,500 for crack sealing and pavement marking.

IRON MOUNTAIN

Ford Airport

\$117,095 for an airport layout plan update, apron rehabilitation, design for hangar upgrades, and an energy assessment.

JACKSON COUNTY

Reynolds Airport

\$1,218,421 for the extension of Runway 14/32.

LAPEER

Dupont-Lapeer Airport

\$117,095 for land acquisition.

MANISTIQUE

Schoolcraft County Airport

\$26,000 for the design of a snow removal equipment building.

MARQUETTE

Sawyer Airport

\$3,994,737 for hangar improvements.

MASON

Mason-Jewett Field

\$13,000 for design work for apron rehabilitation.

MT. PLEASANT

Mt. Pleasant Municipal Airport

\$117,095 for terminal area fencing.

OSCODA

Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport

\$100,000 for crack sealing.

OWOSSO

Owosso Community Airport

\$146,041 for land acquisition.

PELLSTON

Pellston Regional Airport

\$438,500 for land acquisition.

PLYMOUTH

Canton-Plymouth-Mettetal Airport

\$273,376 for an easement acquisition for the Runway 18 approach, and for pavement marking and sealing.

PORT HURON

St. Clair County International Airport

\$49,000 for a master plan update. \$84,502 for approach clearing, pavement marking, and crack sealing.

Sandusky

Sandusky City Airport

\$24,000 for crack sealing and pavement marking.

South Haven

South Haven Area Regional Airport

\$15,000 for crack sealing.

SPARTA

Paul C. Miller Airport

\$284,111 for land acquisition.

WEST BRANCH

West Branch Community Airport

\$243,000 for Runway 9 safety area grading, stream relocation, and crack sealing.

COMMISSION ACTION
Continues On Next Page



COMMISSION ACTION

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Funding for the following airport improvement projects was approved by the Michigan Aeronautics Commission at the July 30, 2008 meeting.
.....

ANN ARBOR

Ann Arbor Municipal Airport

\$225,000 for preliminary design work for an extension of Runway 6/24 to 4,300 feet.

BIG RAPIDS

Roben-Hood Airport

\$187,459 for hangar taxi lanes and installation of sanitary sewer and water lines for the terminal building.

DOWAGIAC

Dowagiac Municipal Airport

\$350,000 to construct a snow removal equipment building.

EVART

Evert Municipal Airport

\$187,500 to construct a new terminal building and for land acquisition.

FLINT

Bishop International Airport

\$930,894 for land acquisition.

GAYLORD

Lakes of the North Airport

\$60,000 for approach clearing.

HOWELL

Livingston County Airport

\$477,250 for land acquisition.

HOWELL

Livingston County Airport

\$157,895 for snow removal equipment and land acquisition.

IRONWOOD

Gogebic-Iron County Airport

\$130,000 for design work for a new terminal building.

JACKSON

Reynolds Field

\$425,000 for land acquisition.

MARLETTE

Marlette Township Airport

\$12,500 for crack sealing.

NEW HUDSON

Oakland Southwest Airport

\$30,000 for a Runway Safety Area determination and an Airport Layout Plan update.

NILES

Jerry Tyler Memorial Airport

\$424,158 for a new fuel facility.

ONTONAGON

Schuster Field

\$180,000 for wetland delineation and preliminary engineering work for a new 2,500 foot crosswind runway.

PONTIAC

Oakland County International Airport

\$4,221,053 for noise mitigation.

RAY

Ray Community Airport

\$47,000 for land acquisition.

SAULT STE. MARIE

Sanderson Field

\$36,000 for an Exhibit A update.

SOUTH HAVEN

South Haven Area Regional Airport

\$5,000 for paint marking.

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Funding for the following airport improvement projects was approved by the Michigan Aeronautics Commission at the September 17, 2008 meeting.
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BATTLE CREEK

W. K. Kellogg Airport

\$360,000 for wetland mitigation.

BENTON HARBOR

Southwest Michigan Regional Airport

\$3,474,990 for extension of Runway 9/27.

DETROIT

Coleman A. Young Municipal Airport

\$250,000 for hangar rehabilitation.

DETROIT METROPOLITAN

Wayne County Airport

\$2,143,946 for the reconstruction of Taxiway K.

DETROIT METROPOLITAN WAYNE COUNTY AIRPORT

\$3,000,000 for design work for the reconstruction of Runway 9L/27R.

GRAND LEDGE

Abrams Municipal Airport

\$11,000 for pavement crack sealing and paint marking.

HILLSDALE

Hillsdale Municipal Airport

\$1,500,000 for obstruction clearing and stream relocation.

LINDEN

Price's Airport

\$100,000 for terminal building construction.

PONTIAC

Oakland County International Airport

\$1,473,684 for Runway 9R/27L safety area improvements.

SAGINAW

H.W. Browne Airport

\$60,500 for rotating beacon and lighted wind cone installation.

SAULT STE. MARIE

Chippewa County International Airport

\$936,842 for hangar improvements.

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... BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT CAESAR WANTED: WHY IS CMX WHERE IT IS?

By Marcelaine Winger Lewis

Every story has a beginning -- this story began one Sunday afternoon in the Upper Peninsula as I was driving my pick-up truck by the old Isle Royal Sands Airport in Houghton, Michigan. Recently, the once barren stamp sand along the Portage Canal shores from the turn-of-the-last-century copper mines had been developed into a waterfront marina with lovely homes. My mind wandered, as it has a tendency to do more frequently these days, to Houghton native, Nancy Harkness Love. Despite being a pilot myself, I had never heard of her until I was standing at the catalog order pickup-counter at the Copper Country Mall JC Penny's. I was wearing one of my "Women Fly" tee shirts. It features a sepia-tone photo of an angel-faced aviatrix in an open cockpit staring into the camera lens with doe eyes.

The clerk at Penny's said, "That photo is on my mother's piano. . . that's Nancy Harkness. My mom was their maid. She knew Nancy when she was learning to fly off the Isle Royal Sands." Isle Royal Sands. . . Isle Royal Sands. . . Isle Royal Sands. . . my friend Houghton High School librarian Nancy Klingbeil. . . her dad. . . Leo Lucchesi was a cool old dude. . . still handsome. . . still a flirt. . . a pilot. . . he always gave me an 'atta girl' whenever I clawed my way through a new rating. I looked at the big, expensive homes on the shoreline and wondered if he had ever flown from the Isle Royal Sands. I wondered if he knew Nancy Harkness.

Later, I asked Nancy to ask him for me -- just out of curiosity.

I was surprised at the answer to that question -- and to other questions that I hadn't asked.

Later that week, I arranged to meet with Leo after one of my flight lessons

When I entered the Lucchesi porch, the fragrance of garlic and Italian herbs made my nose smile. Mary's (Federighe) Italian cooking wafted through the open doorway. They had been married for 61 years.

The Lucchesis are an affectionate, noisy, enthusiastic, passion-filled family. Multi-generations of them were present for my interview with Leo. Grandson Chuck Klingbeil, retired Miami Dolphins noseguard, was yelling about light bulbs that he was changing for his grandparents over the kitchen table. Was he yelling, or was every one just deaf? Or were they deaf from all the yelling? Somebody poured coffee for me. It was strong enough to stand a tow bar upright in. I was a little over-stimulated by all the energy in the house.

Nancy and her mom, Mary greeted me. There was loud laughter. Teasing. Chuck and his wife Doreen, excused themselves and left. Three little white Maltese dogs, Pete, Lou, and Jake were jumping up and down, walking on hind legs, vying for my attention. Somehow, amidst all the exuberance 86-year-young Leo told his story. . . with his loved ones chiming in, interrupting, arguing with him, and reminding him of parts of the Lucchesi oral tradition that he omitted. Nancy and Mary supplemented his saga with family albums and keepsakes.

Caesar Lucchesi with his Cessna Bobcat (1952)



Leo sometimes had trouble remembering the types of airplanes that he flew for his dad over half a century ago. But many of us have trouble remembering what we flew a half decade ago! Nevertheless, Houghton County pilot, Leo Lucchesi vividly recalled his first solo.

Years earlier, in 1921, Caesar, (pronounced Che-zah-ray) a visionary interested in transportation, recognized that air travel would one day replace livery, and automobiles. So he obtained permission from the Isle Royal Mining Company to fly off the Isle Royal Sands where he had built two airplane hangars.

According to Leo, "I worked at the Sands when I was 10-12 years-old, polishing airplanes or painting hangars. Dad had me drive a truck dragging a railroad rail to smooth the sands for the runway."

But Caesar loved the sky, and he often took young Leo on aerial adventures over the scenic Keweenaw Peninsula.

Leo continued, "As we'd fly, he'd say, 'Leo take the stick or wheel—he'd say stick back or stick forward. When you turn, use the rudder.'

One day we were flying the Cub Coupe (Caesar's fourth airplane). After he landed, he said, 'Pull over next to the hangar. Get into my seat. Take off. Circle and land.' My heart was in my mouth. When I took off I was singing I was so happy. I flew towards Dollar Bay. I flew circles. Then I leveled off at 600 feet on the east side of the Sands. I cut the engine, came in, and landed and taxied to the hangar and shut the motor off."

But even on a special day like the day of 'first solo flight' Caesar was a father who demanded a strong work ethic from his children, "My dad said, "You know what to do. Fuel. Wipe off the oil. Wipe down the plane."

Leo was 16-years-old back in the mid 1930s, and he had about 500 hours flying around the U.P. wilderness with his dad, Caesar Lucchesi. The plane was a Cub Coupe, two place, side-by-side Leo had worked hard as a youngster growing up around the family business, South Range Oil and Gas Co., Perhaps he had worked even harder to earn his wings than many of us have.

... BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT CAESAR WANTED: WHY IS CMX WHERE IT IS?

Leo continued with his story of his early days as a student pilot, "My dad let me use the planes any time I wanted with his permission. But soloing is not a license. I took ground school at Michigan Tech (at that time it was known as the Michigan College of Engineering) and passed the knowledge exam. But I had to fly a cross-country solo to Escanaba for the Practical Test with a Federal Examiner.

No radios were required at that time. To navigate, I followed the Lake Shore to L'Anse and used a highway map to find my way to Escanaba.

For my practical test, the Federal Man put me through a series of maneuvers. I passed the test and flew home all in one day. I got my license from the Federal Government. It was about 1937-38."

With sadness Leo added, "I had about 4000 hours when my logbook and license disappeared. I believe it was in 1951, when I was recalled to active duty. My airman's materials disappeared then."****

I asked Leo to explain to me how his dad, an Italian immigrant with little formal education was able to become a pilot and own eight airplanes at a time in America when most Americans did not even own a car.

He responded, "In Italy, the Lucchesis had lived in the mountains. They were loggers. Caesar had come to America in 1899 to work in the Quincy Mine. There he became a foreman and went to work in the Baltic Mine."

Leo's parents, Caesar and Gelsomina (Jenny) Andreini, married in 1904. He had fifty-cents; she had five dollars. She was about fifteen-years-old. They took a streetcar and honeymooned in Calumet. Jenny had come to America from Italy to help her brother who had been hurt in the Baltic Mine after he wrote to his family asking her to come and do laundry and take in miners. Caesar met her there.

Caesar was an enterprising man. He was deputized as a Sheriff in 1906. He maintained his deputy sheriff status until he died. He and Jenny opened a store in Hancock. Then they moved to South Range and opened a livery stable for horses.

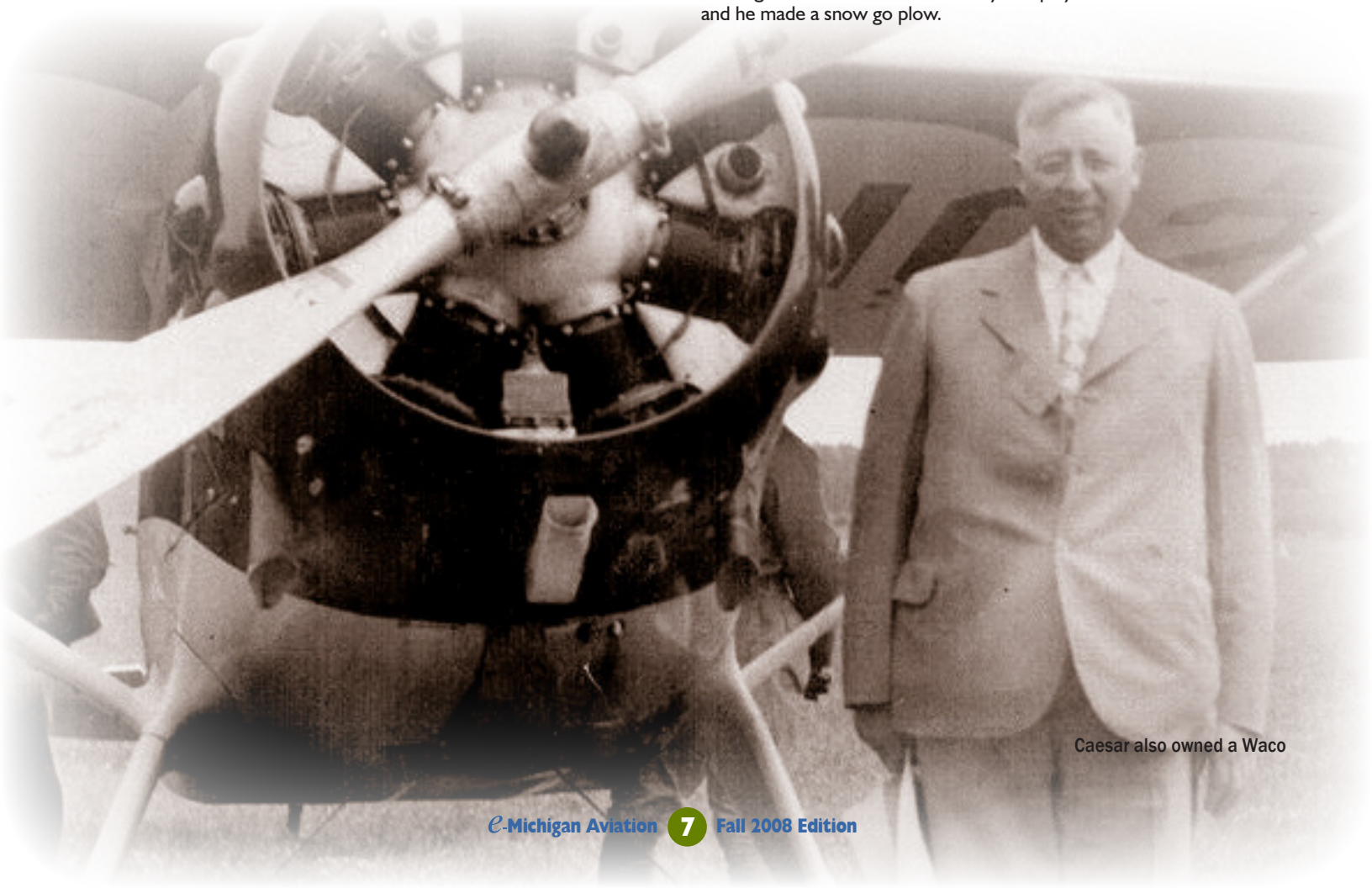
In 1917, Caesar bought a bus for \$6,000 from the White Motor Company in Minneapolis. He paid in cash and sacks of half dollars that he and Jenny had saved from the livery. Another customer bought a bus that same day. Caesar named his bus line Range Bus Line; the other customer named his bus line Greyhound. And so, he began a bus service. But, the hostile U.P. winters threatened to close the bus line in the winter. Nevertheless, that didn't stop him. At his own expense, as a service to the citizens, he hired 50 people to shovel the road from Painesdale to the Bridge in Houghton, and he kept the busses running.

Meanwhile, he went away to Chicago and Minneapolis to learn to fly in 1917-1918. In 1921, he bought his first airplane, a Great Lakes bi-plane.

Leo emphasized, "My dad was very interested in transportation. He knew that in the long run, airplanes would be a big thing."

Then, in 1921 he read that the Army had a tractor with a plow blade for clearing snow—he hired the foundry in Ripley to cast blades all summer and he made a snow go plow.

A Stinson 105 was also one of the airplanes owned by Caesar (1941)



Caesar also owned a Waco

... BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT CAESAR WANTED: WHY IS CMX WHERE IT IS?

Caesar was an astute businessman and keenly aware of his customer's tastes. Leo mischievously added, "Range Bus Line-Livery Stable met the train every day and hauled passengers to the local whore house."

This comment raised a chorus of protest from Leo's daughter and wife in the background.

Leo's brother Geno became a FAA Certificated Flight Instructor and opened a flight school. In 1930, a 16-year-old native Houghton daughter, the child of a wealthy local physician, would start carving out her niche in aviation history with her first solo flight in one of Caesar's planes off his little Isle Royal Sands airport, where the runway was kept smooth by dragging a railroad tie across the surface. Within a month, she would have earned her pilot's license there in Houghton. She would go on to become an early member of the 99s, The International Women's Pilot Organization. Ten years later she would write to Colonel Robert Olds to tell him that she knew forty-nine women pilots — maybe even another fifteen who could ferry aircraft for the War effort. The wing of female flyers would become the WAFFS; Women Aircraft Ferry Squadron. That teenage-girl was Nancy Harkness (Love). Caesar Lucchesi's little airstrip in the geographically remote forests of the Upper Peninsula launched a kid into the sky who helped win a war and change the free world forever.

But, what became of the bus line?

"Mr. Bill Schot, Superintendent of Painesdale Mine came to our home once in a while."

He asked Leo's dad Caesar how much he had invested in the bus line. At that time, the line had grown to about 10 buses.

"Schot put a 'spotter' on the bus line. He observed, at one point, 72 passengers on a 12 passenger bus from Painesdale to Houghton. He arranged for the State Highway Commission to prohibit Caesar from plowing the roads and pressured him into selling his business for the price that he had quoted as his original investment."

Caesar was very upset. But he negotiated with the mines and got them to agree that the mines would buy fuel only from him. Because of his bus lines, he had already established filling stations in Painesdale, Laurium, Houghton, Hancock, Lake Linden, Calumet, Baraga, Pequaming, Toivola, Copper Harbour, and Mohawk.

Big red Texaco Johnson Wings were painted on the canvas skins of his airplanes. He became a charter member of the Civilian Air Patrol.

"He had a wholesale company in South Range and Ripley. The train brought in tankers—made big money for him. From 1927-1940 the bus line had prospered. He sold the tractors and plow for more than he paid for them. It was good. Buses soon went out of business."

Caesar's flying adventures persisted, but not without mishap. "Dad crashed a Stinson in Iron Mountain because of fuel starvation. He called me and said, 'Come and get Ma and me. Ma has a broken leg. Come and get us.'" Leo refused, encouraging his dad, instead to hire an ambulance for his mother's comfort. It was ironic that a pilot who accumulated his wealth through fuel sales would run out of gas. But wait, there's more.

Frequently his dad would have young, handsome Leo fly business associates from Houghton to Meigs Field in Chicago for lunch.

For instruments he had only a compass, ball and bank indicator, tach, and gas gauge. Leo used a road map and followed the Lake Shore to L'Anse; US 41 to Green Bay; and the Lake shore to Chicago Meigs. A man met them there with a (courtesy car) a Chevy station wagon

to Berghoff's, a downtown German Restaurant. Most of the time, however, Leo would fly Caesar's business associates to Land O'Lakes, Wisconsin so that they could gamble.

Leo recalled the challenges of cross-wind landings on his dad's Isle Royal Sands Airport; there was only an East/West runway and no radio communication was required.

Despite his success, Caesar was remarkably generous in sharing his love of flying, and he gave everybody airplane rides for free. In his lifetime he had an astonishing eight airplanes.

Because of the interest that Caesar's aviation entrepreneurship on the Isle Royal Sands had generated, Houghton County decided to build a county public-use airport. It was placed in Laurium. Caesar hangared a plane there; a Stinson 105. In addition, Caesar had the FBO at the Laurium Houghton County Airport where he sold 80 octane yellow/orange.

He needed an airframe and powerplane mechanic, so he sent his son Fred to A&P school to learn the trade.

One cold winter day, Leo pulled one of his dad's planes out the brick hangar at the Laurium Airport and took off to enjoy the crisp Copper Country sky. Because of the cold, dense air, the engine performance was excellent that day. But suddenly, something wasn't "right." The engine would idle, but wouldn't "run." Finally it quit altogether. There was no sound except the quiet swish of the wind-milling prop. Fortunately, the airplane was on skis, and Leo was able to barely clear a fence and safely land the plane in a clearing. Shaken, but ok, Leo again examined the wing-mounted glass bulbs to check for fuel contamination. It turned out that the hangar roof had been leaking. Ice collected and froze in the gas cap vent causing vapor lock.



Caesar's son Leo with one of the family planes. After WWII, Leo often flew clients from the Upper Peninsula to Meigs Field in Chicago

... BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT CAESAR WANTED: WHY IS CMX WHERE IT IS?

Now, every pilot who has ever stood on the CMX ramp gazing at the sky, or circled overhead in a holding pattern waiting for the Lake Superior generated weather to clear has wondered, "Why in the world did they build the airport here?" We are keenly aware that ninety-percent of the time the sky is clear a short 30 miles south of Houghton in the L'Anse Baraga area. Wonder no longer.

Harry Cohodas, a prominent businessman, owner of an Upper Peninsula wide wholesale produce supplier, was a huge fuel customer of Caesar's because of all the produce trucks that he had on the road. Through the years they became good friends.



Now, this is how business was conducted back in those days -- in those days before the middle of the last century -- in a time where a hand-shake sealed a deal and airports were not positioned by engineers or feasibility studies, rather they were positioned by friends: a Catholic and a Jew who trusted each other and conducted business with each other.

Leo was at the airport with his dad that fateful day, the day that would affect future generations of pilots and passengers. He recalls, "Two men traveled to the Laurium Houghton County airport to meet with my dad to ask him how he felt about the Canadians financing a project to build an Emergency Airport for the Canadians on the Baraga Plains about thirty miles southeast of Houghton."

Caesar suggested, instead, that they build it at its present location in Oneco, half-way between Laurium and Hancock. He arranged for them to get together with his friend Harry Cohodas, who donated most of the land for the project."

The Canadians invested \$15,000,000 in the construction of a 6000' concrete runway. After the CMX construction was complete, Caesar built the first hangar there and moved his FBO and airplanes to the Houghton County/Oneco Airport. He installed a 500 gallon tank and sold av-gas. He flew around in the north country skies until the age of 76.

I asked Leo, "Why did your dad want the airport at its present location in Oneco rather than on the Baraga Plains?"

He looked at me with genuine surprise at my lack of insight into the obvious answer to my silly question. Nevertheless, Leo, always the perfect gentleman, politely answered, "Well, Marcelaine. It was only a five-minute drive from my dad's house to his airplanes at Oneco. It would have been over a half hour for him to drive to his planes if they had been in Baraga. The Houghton County Airport was built at its present location. . . because that's what Caesar wanted." ✈



*** Since these interviews were conducted in May, 2003, the author was able to assist Leo in having his lost Airman's Certificate reissued. The FAA also sent him a copy of his complete Airman's file that included photos of him as a swashbuckling young airman. Special thanks must be offered to the Oklahoma City FAA, who despite being short handed because of the number of FAA employees who are Reservists called up for active duty to serve in Operation Iraqi Freedom, they made the time to honor my request to assist the ageing airman. They searched their archives and found Leo's file that had been lost for half a century. Leo was very touched and proud to receive his records shortly before he made his home flight in August, 2003. Blue skies; Tail winds; Soft landings to you, Leo. Thanks for sharing your stories.

Leo Lucchesi - May 18, 1917- August 18, 2003



Author Marcelaine Wininger Lewis is a flight instructor and holds Commercial, Instrument, Flight and Ground Instructor Instrument Land and Sea Licenses. She is also a skydiver and holds USPA Expert License number D-24581. She and her husband John own Agate Beach Aviation, a flight school at CMX. In 2006, she was named Grand Rapids FSDO Flight Instructor of the Year. In addition to flight instruction, she also teaches English and writing. Every day she gets an education from her students on the ground and in the sky.



AVIATION INFORMATION

As part of FAA's ongoing effort to harmonize its paperwork and procedures with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the form for filing a flight plan has changed, but only for IFR flights that include RNAV arrival or departure routing. Pilots filing VFR, or filing IFR but without the RNAV arrivals or departures, can continue to file using the usual flight plan format. Pilots filing point-to-point (RNAV direct) and "T routes" also are not affected. The format change, which took effect in June, is being made to help expedite the FAA's transition to a new en-route computer system for Air Route Traffic Control Centers. Pilots affected by the change can find more information, including frequently asked questions and step-by-step filing instructions, at the [FAA Web site](http://www.faa.gov).

On November 5, 2008 the National Weather Service instituted a change to the format of Terminal Aerodrome Forecasts (TAFs) to conform to new international standards. The new TAFs will be issued for 30 hours, instead of the current 24 hour period, at 32 of the busiest U.S. airports. In Michigan, only Detroit Metropolitan Airport will be affected. However, to maintain standardization, even though other airports will retain their 24-hour forecasts, the format of all TAFs will change.

The change involves adding a two-digit date code which will be associated with each time group. A complete explanation of the change, with examples, is available at <http://aviationweather.gov/notice/taf30.php>.

On February 28 2008, the FAA released its final rule requiring pilots and other airmen to switch from paper pilot certificates to the new counterfeit resistant plastic certificate. Pilots have until March 31, 2010, and all other airmen have until March 31, 2013, to convert their certificates in order to continue to exercise their privileges. After the 2010 and 2013 deadlines, pilots and airman who have not converted will have to request and receive a new plastic certificate before exercising their privileges.

Additionally, pilots who fly from the United States to any foreign destination, will be required to have a new certificate with "English Proficient" on it when acting as a required crewmember after March 5, 2009. This is a result of the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) language proficiency standards for operating internationally.

Temporary, student, and flight instructor certificates (flight instructor certificates are already being issued as plastic) are not affected by this rule. Pilots and airman can request the plastic certificate or a new certificate with the "English Proficient" endorsement on the FAA web site (<http://www.faa.gov>). The cost is two dollars; however, if you are also removing your social security number from your pilot certificate, the switch is free.

According to preliminary figures released in October, overall transportation fatalities in the United States fell four percent from 2006 to 2007 and did include a larger reduction in aviation fatalities. Aviation deaths, specifically, decreased from 784 to 545, with general aviation as the segment's largest contributor. In 2007, nearly 90 percent of aviation deaths were attributed to general aviation accidents. For 2006, 703 of the 784 deaths were attributed to general aviation. For 2007, the numbers show 491 of 545 deaths attributed to GA. The numbers were delivered independent of total hours flown. Overall, there were 43,193 transportation fatalities recorded in 2007 versus 45,085 in 2006. Highway fatalities, the segment that accounts for nearly 95 percent of all transportation deaths, also dipped in 2007 from the previous year. Within that category, however, motorcycle fatalities were marked by a 6 percent increase -- the single largest increase in any specific category across all the included modes of transportation.

The FAA has proposed changes to rules related to aircraft operations by sport pilots. The rule proposes to replace sport pilot privileges with aircraft category and class ratings on all pilot certificates; replace flight instructor privileges with aircraft category ratings on all flight instructor certificates; and remove current provisions for the conduct of proficiency checks by flight instructors and include provisions for the issuance of category and class ratings by designated pilot examiners.

By placing privileges to operate a category and class of aircraft as a rating on a person's sport pilot certificate, the FAA would provide sport pilots with enhanced recognition of their skills and better integrate them into the wider aviation community. This action may not only facilitate further growth in the light-sport industry but may also lead to broader international recognition of these certificates.

The complete proposal can be obtained by visiting <http://www.regulations.gov> and entering FAA-2007-29015-0001 in the search box.

International general aviation flights will be subject to new passenger information requirements beginning on May 19, 2009. This action is part of a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) final rule issued in November.

The rule requires that flight information and passenger manifests for aircraft arriving and departing the United States be filed via the electronic Advance Passenger Information System (eAPIS). Both legs can be filed at the same time, as long as it is done 60 minutes prior to departure. However, pilots in remote areas where Internet access is not available can file the information using the telephone, flight service, or other existing means on a case-by-case basis. Pilots also can update their plan in flight because of changing weather or other conditions.

The address for eAPIS, which includes links to additional information and a tutorial, is <https://eapis.cbp.dhs.gov/>.

Jennifer Granholm, Governor

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